(NASA-TM-78232) AN EVALUATION OF GREASE TYPE BALL BEARING LUBRICANTS OPERATING IN VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS (NASA) 24 p HC A02/MF A01 CSCL 13I G3/37

N79-27515

Unclas 29225

NASA TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

NASA TM-78232

AN EVALUATION OF GREASE TYPE BALL BEARING LUBRICANTS OPERATING IN VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS (Status Report No. 4)

By E. L. McMurtrey
Materials and Processes Laboratory

July 1979

NASA

George C. Marshall Space Flight Center
Marshall Space Flight Center, Alabama

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AN EVALUATION OF GREASE TYPE BALL BEARING LUBRICANTS OPERATING IN VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS (Status Report No. 4)

I. INTRODUCTION

This is the fourth in a series of status reports to be issued covering a long-term test program to evaluate a number of fluid lubricants in ball bearings operating under various environmental conditions. A previous report [1] discussed the general test program and gave the results of the first series of vacuum ambient temperature tests. Since that report, sufficient progress has been made to provide a comparison of many of the greases being evaluated for ball bearing lubricants in different environments; therefore, it is believed that the information also contained in reports Nos. 2 and 3 [2,3] will prove useful to those responsible for selecting lubricants for various space missions.

This program is an extension and expansion on pioneering work done by Young et al. [4] on fluid lubricated bearings operating in vacuum. Because many of the spacecraft planned for the future will require mechanisms that can operate for long periods of time in adverse environments, it is necessary to define the operating limits of available lubricants in these environments. As of March 1979, 340 sets of 680 bearings have completed 1 year of testing, and 100 sets of 200 bearings are undergoing tests. The present plan is to continue the test program using commercially available greases to determine statistically which lubricants will provide maximum bearing operating life with the environmental conditions under which they may be used. This procedure has been used to eliminate all but four candidate lubricants for 5-year tests. These lubricants are now being tested under selected environmental conditions to failure or for a 5-year period.

II. TEST EQUIPMENT

To provide a statistical sample of a number of lubricants operating under various environmental conditions, it is necessary to conduct a large number o.

tests simultaneously. Therefore, 20 test motors, each containing two test bearings, are set up in each chamber. Each test set consists of four samples (eight bearings) of five different lubricants for the 1 year tests. One test set is shown in Figure 1. The bearings chosen for testing are size R-4, 0.635 cm I.D. by 1.59 cm O.D. (0.25 in. I.D. by 0.625 in. O.D.), 440 C steel (RC 60-65) with ribbon type stainless steel cages. An approximate 10 to 15 percent fill of the candidate greases is applied to each bearing.

The motors used in these tests have the following characteristics:

a. Type — ac hysteresis, single phase, 60 cycle

b. Speed — 3600 rpm, synchronous

c. Current — 0.22 amp.

Because these motors do not use brushes, no problems are encountered with brush dust contamination of the bearings. In addition, these motors use approximately the same current when stalled as when operating at 3600 rpm; consequently, a bearing failure does not cause motor damage from overheating. A disassembled motor bearing set is shown in Figure 2.

To control temperature, the motors are mounted in an aluminum plate which is furnished with passages so that thermal control fluids (water or liquid nitrogen) may be used to control the motor temperature. Temperature is measured by thermocouples attached to the mounting plate and to selected motor cases.

Each mounting plate with its motor set is placed in a glass bell jar vacuum system. These bell jars are part of a 12-position vacuum system which is capable of maintaining pressures in the 1.3×10^{-4} N/m^2 (1×10^{-6} torr) range during test operation. The same bell jars are used for the oxidation and low temperature tests.

III. TEST PROCEDURE

Since most bearings operating in space are not subject to a radial load, the major load to the test bearings is a thrust load applied by a wave washer. The motors, specially ordered from the manufacturer, are shimmed to maintain a 2.27 kg (5 lb) thrust load on both bearings. This is equivalent to a 1.28×10^9 N/m^2 (185 000 psi) Hz stress on the balls and inner races. The 3600 rpm

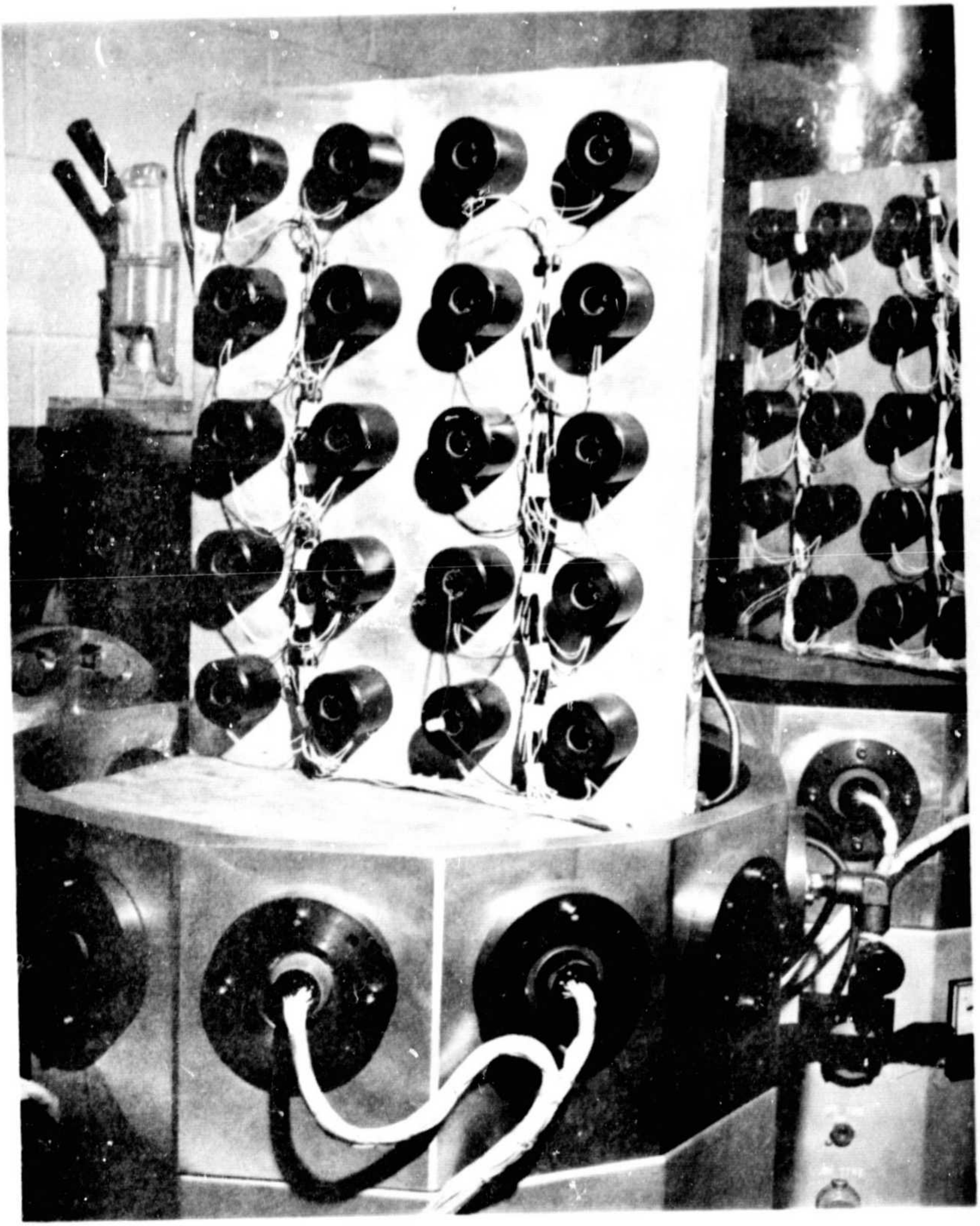

Figure 1. Test motors in vacuum chamber with bell jar removed.

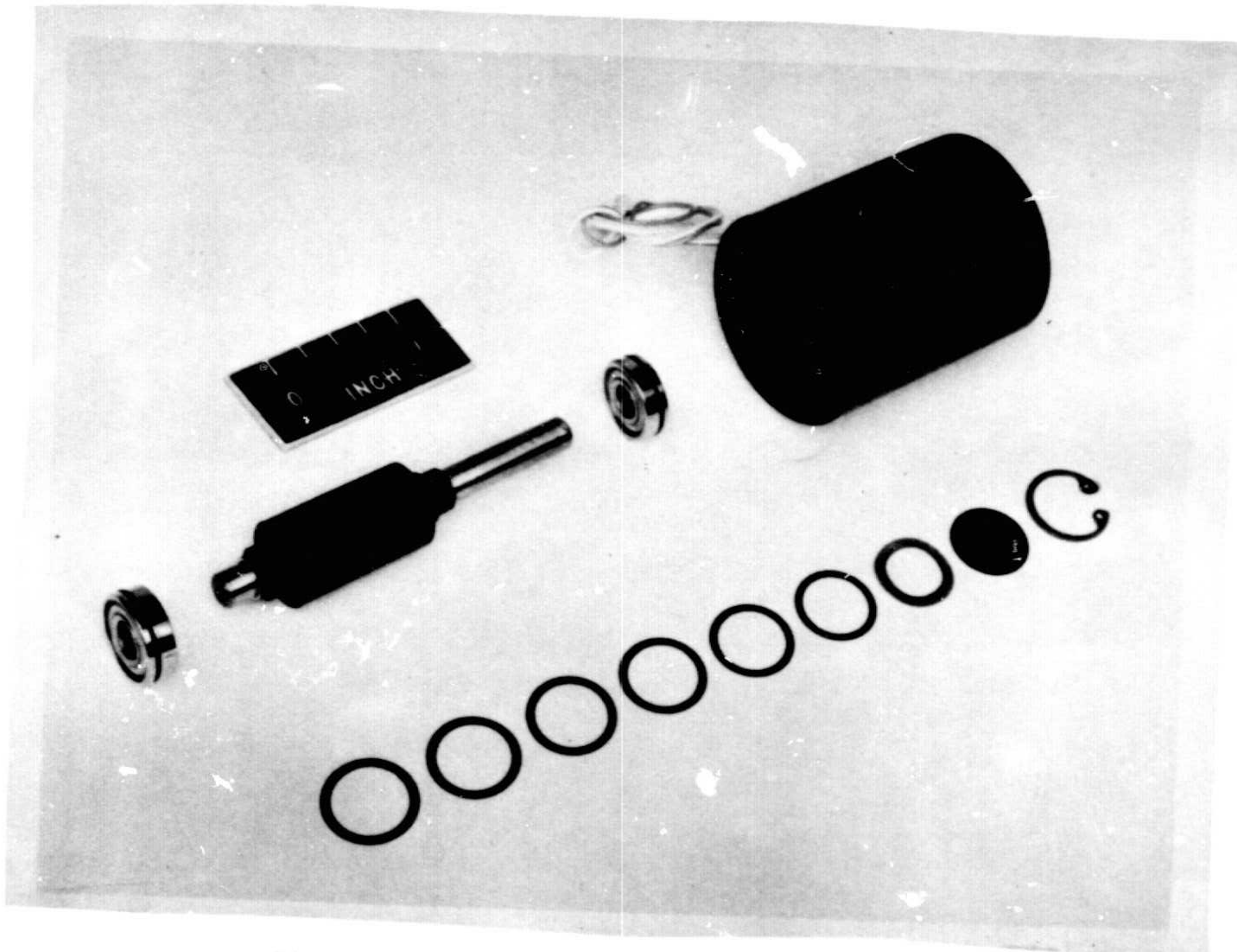

Figure 2. Disassembled ac motor with R–4 bearings.

speed allows 216 000 rev/h on each bearing until failure. Each bearing which survives the 1-year test will have completed approximately 1 892 000 000 revolutions.

At the beginning of the test program, 25 lubricants from seven general chemical classes were selected for evaluation, with 8 lubricants being added after the test program had begun. These lubricants were selected to represent most of the military grease specifications, as well as special nonspecification materials which had shown promise in space applications. The code designations given do not necessarily indicate different chemical compositions; the greases designated PFPE-4, PFPE-5, and PFPE-6 are from the same supplier, but with different base oil viscosities.

A general description of these greases is given in Table 1. It is planned to add additional lubricants to the test program (eight lubricants have been added) if data on new lubricants indicate that they have characteristics that would make them good candidates for one or more of the environments being used in the test program.

The environments for the test program to date are as follows:

a. 6.895×10^4 N/m^2 (10 psi) O_2 at 90 percent relative humidity (oxidation tests)

b. Vacuum, ambient temperature (38°C)

c. Vacuum, high temperature (93.3°C)

d. Vacuum, ambient temperature, with start-stop operation

e Low temperature start.

The present status of the test program is given in Table 2.

The evaluations for all tests, except the low temperature tests, are based primarily on a go/no-go system. The motor torque is low and the inertia of the system is low; therefore, when the bearing tends to seize, the motor stops without further damage to the bearings. The following data are taken during the test:

TABLE 1. DESCRIPTION OF TEST LUBRICANTS

Manufacturer Designation	Lubricant Code	MIL Spec	General Chem. Class of Base Oil	Thickener	38C Oil Viscosity (cs)	Oil Viscosity Index	Description
KG 80	M-1	83176	Highly Refined Mineral	Inorganic	158	101	Instrument Bearing Grease
SRG-200	M-2		Highly Refined Mineral	Inorganic	400	110	Bearing Grease
Aeroshell 5	M-3	3545B	Mineral	Microgel	300		High Temp Aircraft Grease
Royco 24R	M-4	10924B	Mineral	Li Soap			General Purpose Grease
Royco 49	M-5	23549A	Mineral	MoS_2-Nonsoap			General Purpose Grease
Aeroshell 14	M-6	25537A	Mineral	Ca Soap	14		Oscillating Bearing Grease
Aeroshell 16	M-7	25760A	Synthetic Mineral	Microgel	38		Bearing Grease, Wide Temp Range
Apiezon L	M-8		Straight Chain Hydrocarbon	None			Vacuum Grease
Unitemp 500	M-9		Mineral-Diester	Na Soap	55		Bearing Grease, Wide Temp
Mobilgrease 28	M-10	81322	Synthetic Hydrocarbon	Nonsoap			High Temp Aircraft Grease
Conoco HD#2	M-11		Mineral	Synthetic	108		High Temp Corrosion Resistant Grease
Supermil 06752	ES-1	25760A	Diester	Arylurea			Bearing Grease, Wide Temp
Aeroshell 17	ES-2	21164C	Diester	Microgel	14		Wide Temp Grease with MoS_2
Aeroshell 7	ES-3	23827A	Diester	Microgel	14		Aircraft Instrument Grease
L-11G	ES-4		Diester	Li Soap + MoS_2	14		Aircraft Instrument Grease
Exxon 5182	ES-5		Synthetic Ester	Li Soap	162	160	High Temp Aircraft Grease
Exxon Beacon 325	ES-6	23627	Synthetic Ester	Li Soap	11.8		Low Temp Grease
D.C. No. 33	Si-1		Silicone	Li Soap	750		Vacuum Grease
G-351	Si-2		Silicone	Li Soap			High Temp Ball Bearing Grease
Supermil 31052	Si-3	25013D	Silicone	Organic Dye			Ball and Roller Bearing Grease
G-330M	Si-4		Silicone				General Purpose Grease
G-341L	Si-5		Silicone				Aircraft and Instrument Grease
3L27-2	Si-X		Silicone	Silica			Radiation Resistant Bearing Grease, Experimental
FS 1281	FS-1		Fluorosilicone	Silica			Vacuum Grease, Low Speed Bearing
FS 1290	FS-2		Fluorosilicone				Chem. Inert Bearing Grease
803	PFPE-1		PFPE	Fluorotelomer	424	129	High Vacuum Bearing Grease
3L38-RP	PFPE-2		PFPE	Fluorotelomer	129	350	Chem. Inert High and Low Temp Grease
3L-38RP Baked*							
631A	PFPE-3		PFPE	Fluorotelomer	153	110	Chem. Inert Bearing Grease
240AZ	PFPE-4		PFPE	Fluorotelomer	18	23	Chem. Inert, Low Temp Grease
240AB	PFPE-5		PFPE	Fluorotelomer	85	113	Chem. Inert Vacuum Grease, High Temp
240AC	PFPE-6		PFPE	Fluorotelomer	270	134	Chem. Inert Vacuum Grease, High Temp
Kel-F No. 90	FCC-1		Fluorocarbon	Silica			Chem. Inert High Temp Grease

*Vacuum baked at 212°F for 20 hrs.

TABLE 2. PRESENT STATUS OF LUBRICANT TESTS

Lube Code		Test Conditions: Oxidizing Environment	Vacuum (38°C)	Vacuum (93.3°C)	Vacuum (Start-stop)	Low Temperature Start
KG-80	M-1	a	a	a	a	a
SRG-200	M-2		a	a	a	a
Aeroshell 5	M-3		a, c	a, c	a, c	a
Royco 24R	M-4		a			a
Royco 49	M-5		a	a	a	a
Aeroshell 14	M-6		a			a
Aeroshell 16	M-7		a			
Apiezon L	M-8		a			
Unitemp 500	M-9		a			
Mobilgrease 28	M-10		a	b	a	
Conoco HD #2	M-11		b	b	a	a
Supermil 06752	ES-1	a	a		a	a
Aeroshell 17	ES-2		a			
Aeroshell 7	ES-3			a	a	a
L-11G	ES-4		a			a
Exxon 5182	ES-5		b	b	a	a
Exxon 325	ES-6		b			a
DC No. 33	Si-1	a	a			
G-351	Si-2	a	a, c	a, c	a, c	a
Supermil 31052	Si-3		a	a	a	a
G-330M	Si-4			a		
G-341L	Si-5		b	b	a	a
3L27-2	Si-X	a	a	a		
FS-1281	FS-1	a	a			
FS-1290	FS-2		a	a, a	a	
Kel-F No. 90	FCC-1			a		
803	PFPE-1	a, a	a, c	a, c	a, c	a
3L-38RP	PFPE-2	a	a, c	a, a, c	a, c	a
3L-38RP Baked*			b	b	a	a
631A	PFPE-3		a	a	a	a
240 AZ	PFPE-4	a	a	a	a	a
240 AB	PFPE-5		a	a	a	
240 AC	PFPE-6		a	a	a	a

a Test complete, 1 year or 2 days (Low Temperature Start only)
b Test underway, 1 year
c Test underway, 5 year

*Vacuum baked at 100°C for 20 hr.

a. Total test time

b. Vacuum or atmospheric conditions

c. Temperature

d. Total cycles, if appropriate.

The bearings are weighed before and after testing, and the percent of weight loss of lubricant is calculated. The bearings are then photographed and cleaned, and selected bearings are subjected to scanning electron microscope (SEM) examination. Chemical analysis is made where applicable. SEM's and chemical analysis have not been added to this report.

In the low temperature tests, the motors are installed in the cooling plate, and the system is evacuated to prevent frost formation. LN_2 is circulated through the cooling plate. The temperature is measured with thermocouples in contact with the outer race of the front bearing. Before cooling is initiated, the motors are operated for 30 min to channel the grease. The temperature is then dropped to -100°C and held approximately 30 min. The temperature is then allowed to rise slowly using a thermocouple on the mounting plate for control. After each 3°C rise, the motors are switched on for approximately 5 s, and the temperature of the front bearings is recorded. When each motor starts and comes up to full speed, the front bearing temperature is used as the low temperature starting capability of the lubricant. The starting torque of the motors used in this test is 1.05×10^{-2} N m (1.5 in. oz). Each low temperature test is repeated at least twice, and an average temperature is taken of the four motors and two tests.

IV. TEST RESULTS

A. Low Temperature Start Tests

At the present time, 21 of the candidate lubricants have been evaluated for low temperature capability. Unfortunately, the temperature at which the bearings will stall is a function of the volume of grease in the bearing, as well as the viscosity of the grease; therefore, some variation in stall temperature

is sure to occur. To help overcome this difficulty, four motors are tested with each lubricant and at least two tests are made on each motor. The resulting stall temperatures are then averaged. Results of these tests are shown in Table 3. Ordinarily the vacuum stability requirements and the low temperature starting torque requirements are mutually exclusive because a low viscosity fluid provides better low temperature capabilities and a high viscosity fluid tends to be more vacuum stable. The results of these tests are, therefore, rather surprising since the PFPE-2 grease, which has a 38°C viscosity of 130 cs, has superior low temperature capabilities and is also one of the most vacuum stable greases evaluated. These capabilities are somewhat more understandable when it is noted that the base oil for this grease has a viscosity index of 350 and a molecular weight of over 9000.

TABLE 3. LOW TEMPERATURE START, °C

Lubricant	1	2	3	4	Average
Si-3	-62.8	-78.9	-76.1	-70.0	-71.9
PFPE-2	-61.4	-57.5	-72.5	-82.2	-68.4
PFPE-2 Baked*	-68.1	-66.7	-64.7	-64.7	-66.0
M-4	-58.9	-70.8	-60.0	-58.9	-62.1
M-6	-56.7	-55.0	-60.3	-60.3	-58.1
ES-4	-53.9	-57.8	-55.8	-55.0	-55.6
ES-1	-51.1	-53.8	-51.1	-51.1	-51.8
Si-5	-49.2	-49.2	-49.2	-49.2	-49.2
ES-3	-53.9	-41.1	-56.1	-42.1	-48.3
PFPE-1	-44.3	-44.3	-49.4	-48.0	-46.5
ES-5	-42.5	-42.5	-46.4	-46.4	-44.5
ES-6	-41.4	-41.4	-41.4	-41.4	-41.4
PFPE-4	-36.1	-36.1	-36.1	-36.7	-36.3
M-5	-22.1	-20.3	-26.4	-21.1	-22.7
M-11	-21.9	-21.9	-21.9	-21.9	-21.9
Si-2	-16.7	-16.7	-16.1	-16.1	-16.4
M-3	-16.1	-10.3	-16.1	-18.1	-15.2
M-1	-6.7	-4.4	-4.4	-4.4	-4.98
PFPE-6	-4.4	-4.4	+1.1	-4.4	-3.02
PFPE-3	-0.56	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.14
M-2	+3.30	+3.30	-8.30	+3.30	+0.40

*Baked in vacuum at 100°C for 20 hr.

B. Standard Vacuum Weight Loss Tests

The results of standard outgassing tests using a Knudsen cell are shown on Figures 4 through 8 of status Report No. 3 [3]. Further research and development work on outgassing tests is being conducted by the Physical Sciences Branch, Engineering Physics Division, Materials and Processes Laboratory, but it will not be reported in these subsequent status reports on bearing lubricants. The Physical Sciences Branch supplied the data for the aforementioned figures in Status Report No. 3. Further outgassing tests on lubricants will be reported by that organizational element.

C. Continuous Vacuum Ambient Temperature Tests

Eight 1-year tests have been completed; the results are given in Table 4. Forty motors (10 lubricants) have had no failures resulting from lubricant depletion, but motor No. 3 of lubricant M-3 had a drive motor failure. Also, the first eight lubricants listed have had less than a 20 percent average weight loss.

The average temperatures (eight tests) have been as follows:

Front bearing — 98°F (36.7°C)
Rear bearing — 146°F (63.3°C)
Mounting plate — 72°F (22.2°C).

D. Continuous Vacuum High Temperature Tests

Four 1-year tests have been completed; the results are given in Table 5. Thirty-six motors (nine lubricants) have had no failures resulting from lubricant depletion, but motor No. 2 of lubricant M-2 had a drive motor failure. Also, the first six lubricants listed have had less than a 20 percent average weight loss.

The temperature in these high temperature tests is controlled by regulating the cooling water supply to the mounting plate so as to maintain its temperature at 65°C (150°F). The average temperatures (four tests) have been as follows:

TABLE 4. RESULTS OF VACUUM TESTS AT 38°C

Lubricant	Hours to Failure[a]					Weight Loss (%)[b]				
	1	2	3	4	Average	1	2	3	4	Average
PFPE-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	5	7	8.5	5	6.5
Si-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	3.5	12	6	4.5	6.5
M-5	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	7.5	5	8	6.5	6.8
PFPE-6	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	6	13.5	12.5	7	9.8
M-3	8760	8760	c	8760	8760	6	13	12	8.5	10
PFPE-3	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	10	15.5	8.5	8	10.5
FS-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	7	21	17.5	11.5	14
PFPE-1	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	10.5	33	15	17	19
M-10	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	26	20.5	19	23	22.1
M-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	66	49	39	50	51
M-1	8760	8760	3700	8760	7495	21.5	27.5	23	25	24
Si-1	8760	8760	1709	8760	6997	35	25	41	22.5	31
PFPE-4	684	8760	8760	8760	6741	26	11.5	13	9	15
ES-1	3524	8760	8437	4397	6280	24.5	39.5	23.5	18.5	26.5
M-7	2530	8760	8760	3367	5854	53.5	47	54.5	42	49.5
PFPE-5	2096	3517	8760	8760	5783	33.5	40.5	3.5	3.5	20.3
Si-X	1041	6015	8760	5710	5382	27.5	28	40	47.5	36
M-8	392	8760	8524	1976	4913	3.3	0.8	0.8	11.3	4.0
M-9	2543	1487	1199	8760	3497	34.5	27.5	49.5	24.5	34
Si-3	5613	2164	1659	456	2473	52.5	27	43.5	24.5	36.9
M-4	2671	859	311	160	1000	74.5	73.5	82	78	77
ES-2	427	696	743	911	694	61.5	56	72.5	62	63.5
ES-4	559	593	559	823	634	30.5	32.5	39	41	35.5
FS-1	174	245	831	511	440	7.5	14.5	22.5	15.5	15
M-6	473	219	336	286	329	67	76	68.5	70.5	70.5

a. Or to end of test (1 year = 8760 hr).

b. Percent of weight loss of total weight of grease added to the two bearings of each motor (motor Nos. 1 through 4).

c. Drive motor failed.

TABLE 5. RESULTS OF VACUUM TESTS AT 93.3°C

Lubricant	Hours to Failure[a]					Weight Loss (%)[b]				
	1	2	3	4	Average	1	2	3	4	Average
PFPE-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	13	13.5	14	17	14.5
PFPE-6	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	19.5	9	19.5	13.5	15.5
PFPE-5	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	14	21.5	12	15.5	16
PFPE-1	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	18	12.5	24.5	12	17
M-5	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	15	24.5	14.5	15.5	17.4
PFPE-3	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	18	16.5	24	19	19.5
M-3	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	29.5	35	27	34.5	31.5
M-1	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	29	37	32	43	35.5
M-2	8760	c	8760	8760	8760	55	31	50	47.5	46
FS-2	6813	8760	8760	8760	8273	59	35.5	30.5	35	40.5
Si-2	8760	2870	8760	8760	7288	23	51	23.5	36	33.5
Si-4	1218	8760	7940	6609	6132	50.5	9	27	25	27.9
Si-3	686	2290	1702	2327	1751	47.5	41	48.5	35.5	43.5
PFPE-4	3193	350	2523	282	1587	54	39	63	44	50
FCC-1	353	1280	521	166	580	47	53	47.5	54	50.5
Si-X	174	101	1047	68.5	348	70.5	59.5	56	62.5	62.5
ES-3	82	73	70	71	74	85.5	91.5	83.5	88	87.1

a. Or to end of test (1 year = 8760 hr).

b. Percent of weight loss of total weight of grease added to the two bearings of each motor (motor Nos. 1 through 4).

c. Drive motor failed.

Front bearing — 173°F (78.3°C)
Rear bearing — 212°F (100°C)
Mounting plate — 155°F (68.3°C).

E. Continuous Oxidation Tests

During the development of the Skylab thermal control fan, problems were encountered with bearings operating in a highly oxidizing atmosphere; therefore, it was believed that a highly oxidative environment should form a part of the present evaluations.

The first set of tests was made in air at 90 percent relative humidity. However, it appeared that a pure oxygen environment would be more severe; therefore, an additional set of tests was made in 10 psi pure oxygen at 90 percent relative humidity. Although no temperature measurements were made during these tests, bearing operating temperatures should have been very close to those reported for the 38°C tests, since the operating procedure for controlling cooling water flow to the motor mounting plate was essentially the same.

Only the two 1-year tests previously mentioned have been completed; the results are given in Table 6. Thirty-two motors (eight lubricants) have had no failures resulting from lubricant depletion, but motor No. 3 of lubricant Si-1 had a drive motor failure. Also, the first five lubricants listed have had less than a 20 percent average weight loss.

F. Start-Stop Vacuum Ambient Temperature Tests

Since many mechanisms do not operate continuously, it was decided to simulate the boundary conditions which exist between the balls and races of a bearing during acceleration and deceleration. Timers are used to shut off the motors for 10 s every 150 s (24 c/h) or for 20 s every 180 s (20 c/h).

Four 1-year tests have been completed; the results are given in Table 7. Thirty-six motors (nine lubricants) have had no failures resulting from lubricant depletion. Also, the first seven lubricants listed have had less than a 20 percent average weight loss.

TABLE 6. RESULTS OF OXIDIZING TESTS

Lubricant	Hours to Failure[a]					Weight Loss (%)[b]				
	1	2	3	4	Average	1	2	3	4	Average
Si-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	9.6	1.7	4.0	3.7	4.8
PFPE-1[c]	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	5	5.5	5.5	5	5.3
PFPE-1	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	6.7	3.8	20.8	8.8	10.0
ES-1[c]	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	12.5	12	11.5	12	12
M-1	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	20	19	17.8	22.6	19.9
Si-X[c]	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	35.5	40.5	43	42	40
PFPE-4	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	50.9	30	70.7	39.0	47.7
Si-1[c]	8760	8760	d	8760	8760	48.5	47	40	46	45.4
PFPE-2	8760	4795	8760	8760	7769	6.7	47.1	11.8	11.3	19.2
FS-1[c]	8760	405	8760	8760	6671	3	3.5	3	4.5	3.5

a. Or to end of test (1 year = 8760 hr).

b. Percent of weight loss of total weight of grease added to the two bearings of each motor (motor Nos. 1 through 4).

c. These tests were run in air at 90% relative humidity. All other tests were run in 10 psi pure oxygen at 90% relative humidity.

d. Drive motor failed.

TABLE 7. RESULTS OF START-STOP TESTS

Lubricant	Hours to Failure[a]					Weight Loss (%)[b]					Cycle Time (s)
	1	2	3	4	Average	1	2	3	4	Average	
PFPE-6	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	8	3	6.5	4	5.4	180
PFPE-1	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	4.5	5	3.5	10	5.8	150
PFPE-2[c]	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	5.7	6.1	6.7	6.1	6.2	180
PFPE-2	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	7	8.5	4.5	7.5	7	150
ES-5	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	7.1	7.4	8.8	5.2	7.1	180
M-3	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	12	6	8.5	10.5	9.3	180
PFPE-3	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	9.5	20.5	12	28	18	180
M-11	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	24.3	21.1	20.6	17.3	20.8	180
M-5	8760	8760	8760	8760	8760	23	31	12	25	22.8	180
M-1	8760	8760	6790	8760	8268	6.5	14	36.5	11	17	180
Si-3	5409	8760	8760	8760	7922	32	12.5	12	14	17.5	180
M-10	6261	6313	8760	8760	7524	47.4	46.6	22.8	37.1	38.5	180
PFPE-5	8760	8760	8760	2817	7274	5	3.5	1.5	23	8	150
ES-1	5783	8760	5497	8760	7200	44.5	16	57	15	33.5	180
M-2	8760	8760	1848	8760	7032	27	26	46	20	30	180
Si-2	8760	1557	8760	8760	6959	3	9.5	5	5	5.5	150
FS-2	685	8760	8760	5684	5972	15	19	21.5	25.5	20.5	150
Si-5	5577	8760	629	8760	5932	40.3	5.1	31.8	8.5	21.4	180
PFPE-4	4977	4737	5926	6586	5557	84	76.5	66.5	70	74.3	180
ES-3	3345	3501	2117	4340	3326	76	69.5	68.5	68	70.5	180

a. Or to end of test (1 year = 8760 hr).

b. Percent of weignt loss of total weight of grease added to the two bearings of each motor (motcr Nos. 1 through 4).

c. Baked in vacuum at 100°C for 20 hr.

Cycle counters are used at the start-stop stations to record the total number of cycles. The total cycles of the four completed tests were as follows:

1. 202 382
2. 188 342
3. 175 206
4. 177 337.

The average temperatures (four tests) were as follows:

Front bearing — 96°F (35.6°C)
Rear bearing — 114°F (45.6°C)
Mounting plate — 70°F (21.1°C).

V. FUTURE PLANS

Since all but four lubricants have been eliminated for the 5-year test program, a rating sheet (Table 8) was devised to eliminate those lubricants which perform poorly under the various test environments. The ratings are made by assigning the number 1 to the lubricant which performs the best in a particular test, the number 2 to the second best, etc. Where several lubricants are considered equal, the positions are averaged and assigned to all of the equivalent lubricants. Table 8 is used to illustrate the comparative principle only, because some of the tests are not complete and some of the greases have not yet been tested; however, using this chart, it was decided to eliminate 15 of the materials from further testing because they have performed poorly in either the vacuum ambient or vacuum high temperature tests.

The present test program will continue with the four candidate lubricants for the 5-year test program. Also, eight additional lubricants have been placed under test in selected environments for 1-year periods to see whether these lubricants warrant further testing. As many samples of each grease as possible will be evaluated.

VI. PRESENT STATUS

One hundred tests are now underway, and the status of these tests as of June 1979 is shown in Table 9. The present test series is now progressing rapidly with three 5-year tests and two 1-year tests in operation.

TABLE 8. LUBRICANT RATING CHART

Lube Code		Oxidizing Environment	Vacuum (38°C)	Vacuum (93.3°C)	Vacuum (Start-Stop)	Low Temperature Start	Decision
KG-80	M-1	4.5	11	5	10	18	
SRG-200	M-2		5.5	5	15	21	
Aeroshell 5	M-3		5.5	5	5	17	
Royco 24R	M-4		21			4	EL
Royco 49	M-5		5.5	5	5	14	
Aeroshell 14	M-6		25			5	EL
Aeroshell 16	M-7		15				EL
Apiezon L	M-8		18				EL
Unitemp 500	M-9		19				EL
Mobilgrease 28	M-10		5.5		12		
Conoco HD #2	M-11				5	15	
Supermil 06752	ES-1	4.5	14		14	7	EL
Aeroshell 17	ES-2		22				EL
Aeroshell 7	ES-3			17	20	9	EL
L-11G	ES-4		23			6	EL
Exxon 5182	ES-5				5	11	
Beacon 325	ES-6					12	
DC No. 33	Si-1	4.5	12				EL
G-351	Si-2	4.5	5.5	11	16	16	
Supermil 31052	Si-3		20	13	11	1	EL
G-330M	Si-4			12			EL
G-341L	Si-5				18	8	
3L27-2	Si-X	4.5	17	16			EL
FS-1281	FS-1	10	24				EL
FS-1290	FS-2		5.5	10	17		
KEL-F No. 90	FCC-1			15			EL
803	PFPE-1	4.5[a]	5.5	5	5	10	
3L-38RP	PFPE-2	9	5.5	5	5	2	
3L-38RP Baked					5	3	
631A	PFPE-3		5.5	5	5	20	
240 AZ	PFPE-4	4.5	13	14	19	13	
240 AB	PFPE-5		16	5	13		
240 AC	PFPE-6		5.5	5	5	19	

Note: EL — eliminate from further testing.

a. Two tests (see Table 2).

TABLE 9. HOURS TO FAILURE IN TESTS NOW OPERATING

Continuous Vacuum Ambient Temperature (started 6-23-76) 5 Year

PFPE-1		22 676		21 140	
PFPE-2					
M-3					
Si-2	19 323	21 424			1 411

Start-Stop Vacuum Ambient Temperature (started 11-12-76) 5 Year

PFPE-1		978		11 116	
PFPE-2				5 275	
M-3			11 510	4 901	7 006
Si-2			658		586

Continuous Vacuum High Temperature (started 4-18-78) 5 Year

PFPE-1		3 971	5 754	9 012	
PFPE-2	2 175				
M-3					
Si-2			1 759		

Continuous Vacuum Ambient Temperature (started 7-21-78) 1 Year

PFPE-2[a]					
ES-5					
M-11					
Si-5	4 739				
ES-6	3 563	5 199		1 8[illegible]4	

Continuous Vacuum High Temperature (started 4-9-79) 1 Year

ES-5		1 445		1 327	
M-10	1 091	1 338		1 274	
PFPE-2[a]					
M-11					
Si-5		755	515		

a. Baked in vacuum at 100°C for 20 hours.

VII. CONCLUSIONS

Some testing remains to be done in this program; however, from the data so far the following conclusions from the vacuum tests are being made:

a. As a whole, the chemical class listed as PFPE in Table 1 has given the best results in all the vacuum tests completed to date.

b. In the vacuum ambient temperature tests, Si-2 and M-5, as well as PFPE-2 and PFPE-6, have given the best results with less than a 10 percent average weight loss.

c. In the vacuum high temperature tests, M-5, and all the PFPE greases (except PFPE-4) have given the best results with less than a 20 percent average weight loss.

d. In the start-stop tests, ES-5, M-3, and the PFPE greases (except PFPE-3, PFPE-4, and PFPE-5) have given the best results with less than a 10 percent average weight loss.

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APPROVAL

AN EVALUATION OF GREASE TYPE BALL BEARING LUBRICANTS OPERATING IN VARIOUS ENVIRONMENTS
(Status Report No. 4)

By E. L. McMurtrey

The information in this report has been reviewed for security classification. Review of any information concerning Department of Defense or nuclear energy activities or programs has been made by the MSFC Security Classification Officer. This report, in its entirety, has been determined to be unclassified.

R. J. Schwinghamer

R. J. Schwinghamer
Director, Materials and Processes Laboratory

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